

Food campaign – insights

Strictly confidential and for planning use only. The agency awarded the contract will receive the full strategic insights deck.

From Eat like a Londoner:

- **Awareness:** between 1 in 10 and 1 in 20 Londoners reported seeing the Eat like a Londoner campaign. By securing additional campaign funding, involving all London boroughs and activating local communities, we could achieve greater awareness levels for this campaign to encourage London citizens to minimise household food waste and recycle it correctly.
- **Consideration:** 3 in 5 Londoners reported taking a relevant action after seeing the Eat like a Londoner campaign, with wasting less food, eating more plant-based foods and eating less meat and dairy equally likely to be adopted as a behaviour. Among those that did not recognise the ads, over half (55%) of Londoners said they would consider exploring more ways to reduce the amount of food they throw away. We could expect similar levels of consideration for a campaign that encourages food waste reduction and food waste recycling.
- **Consumption-based emissions:** 86% of the food consumed in London is eaten at home – around 460 kg per person per year¹. Minimising food waste and proper recycling of it could have a large impact on consumption-based emissions. A more detailed analysis will be needed to quantify this potential impact.

General insight:

Audience targeted by previous campaigns (including segments who are high food wasters or more likely to be receptive to change):

- Londoners aged 21-44 and those with children under 11 years old at home
- Value-driven, environmentally conscientious and idealistic – but who have a gap between the values they hold and the actions they take. They are also big consumers, tend to lead busy lives and live in urban areas; and

¹ [ReLondon: Food Footprint Report 2021.](#)

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care about the environment, with a global outlook on social issues. Busy and often with young children, they are under both time and financial pressure.

- Frequent purchasers, hedonistic and driven by social status – who say that they care about climate change but do not think that the environment is their problem to fix. Often high income, with busy lives, they also tend to live in urban areas.
- See WRAP Circular Living segmentation I, 3 and 7.²

Factors that lead to high food waste:

- Indirect factors: Displaced meals, convenience shoppers and food attitudes (being comfortable not using up all the food they buy)
- Socio-demographic factors: Living on their own as opposed to living with parents/family
- Behavioural / competency factors: Judging / buying the right amount and storage competencies (fridge / freezer management, using up partly-used food)

Food management insights:

- People don't always know how or have the capability to store, freeze or revive food properly. Factors like sharing accommodation, private renting and low incomes can contribute to a lack of freezer space, with 2.8 million people in the UK living without a freezer, highlighting the broader issue of appliance poverty.³
- There's also a **knowledge gap around food preservation**. 84% of citizens are unaware of what the safe operating temperature of a fridge should be, with 71% of household fridges operating at an unsafe temperature. No one likes to admit they don't know what to do, so it's often easier to bin food than try to salvage it.⁴
- People often **forget about food they've bought once it's stored** – especially in the fridge or freezer. If it's not visible or convenient, it gets ignored – because life is busy, and managing food feels like just another task. There's also a disconnect between food and finances; **people don't see wasted food as wasted money**.⁵

² [WRAP: Circular Living Segmentation 2025](#).

³ [Turn2Us: Living Without: The Scale and Impact of Appliance Poverty 2020](#).

⁴ [Food Cardiff: Research study finds 71% of household fridges tested operating at unsafe temperature \(2024\)](#)

⁵ [WRAP: Opportunities for prevention with household food waste collections \(2024\)](#)

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- Despite this, inflation is top-of-mind for citizens, with 54% reporting their cost of living increasing since the previous month.⁶
- Through Eat like a Londoner, we aimed to increase the saliency of food waste by more clearly and directly connecting it to managing budgets and resources with higher prices of food. Food waste recycling caddies can help to highlight the relationship between user behaviour and food waste through awareness, reflection and positive reinforcement.⁷
- People **feel guilty about wasting food** — but they avoid dealing with that guilt by justifying it (“It was already going bad”, “We never eat leftovers”, “It’s not that much”). And even when caddies are used regularly, they can be a hassle to manage, causing some users to dislike interacting with it.⁸
- There’s often a **disconnect from actions at home** and the personal impact it can create. If people don’t see the personal harm their waste causes, they don’t feel a strong emotional reason to change.
- 50% of adults in the UK cannot identify the correct definition for a use-by date: that is, that food can be eaten until the use-by date, but not safely after. This is in contrast to the best before date, which is about quality, and food eaten past this date might not taste as good.⁹
- There’s also a **widespread emotional attachment to food being perfectly fresh**, which trickles top down from supermarkets, leading people to bin things too early. People fear illness, judgment, or poor taste, so they discard food that’s still usable — “just in case.”

Food waste recycling and caddies:

- Compostable liners break easily, leading to more mess in the caddy and an unpleasant cleanup process.
- Condensation or bin juice that collects in the caddy contributes to the unpleasant cleaning experience and is despised by many.
- Especially in warmer weather, the caddies can quickly take on a smell and attract bugs such as flies or maggots.
- No one wants to be wasteful, but the emotional discomfort of guilt and unpleasant cleaning process makes people dismiss or rationalise the behaviour.

Food waste recycling and lack of feedback loops:

⁶ [WRAP: Opportunities for prevention with household food waste collections \(2024\)](#)

⁷ [WRAP: Opportunities for prevention with household food waste collections \(2024\)](#)

⁸ [WRAP: Opportunities for prevention with household food waste collections \(2024\)](#)

⁹ [Food Standards Agency: The FSA reveals that 50% of adults do not always check the use-by date on their food putting themselves and family at risk \(2022\)](#)

- When people do recycle food or reduce waste, there's rarely any visible or emotional reward. Although 41% of citizens in the UK have access to and use a food waste recycling service, 7% of citizens have access to it but have never used it, and 9% of citizens have previously used it but have since stopped (lapsed users).¹⁰
- On top of this, different boroughs have different bins, rules and collection schedules that vary between different types of properties, adding to already low levels of confidence and worthwhileness.
- In ReLondon's 'Recycling in flats above shops' report¹¹, it was concluded that to recycle well, citizens must be motivated. And to be motivated, citizens need to understand whether they, and their neighbours, are doing the right thing or not, and be more actively informed about what happens to their recycling. Behaviour change sticks better with feedback and gratification – which the food recycling system rarely provides.

Food waste recycling service background:



¹⁰ [WRAP: Recycling tracker survey in the UK: Spring 2024 \(2024\)](#)

¹¹ [ReLondon: Recycling in flats above shops \(2023\)](#)

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Boroughs participation:

The 17 boroughs participating in the campaign are:

- Barnet
- Bexley
- Camden
- Ealing
- Enfield
- Hackney
- Hammersmith & Fulham
- Haringey
- Hillingdon
- Islington
- Kensington & Chelsea
- Lewisham
- Merton
- Richmond
- Waltham Forest
- Wandsworth
- Westminster

You can learn more about each borough's recycling services [here](#).

Additional resources:

- [WRAP: Buy loose, waste less: more than half of UK adults shopping for fresh fruit and veg prefer loose over packaged \(2025\)](#)
- [WRAP: Household food waste collections guide \(2025\)](#)